Kernels

You’re making sure people in every Vermont community can celebrate with a full plate.

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Fall 2022

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Vermont Foodbank
VTFOODBANK.ORG
Humans celebrate and comfort one another with food. Times of joy, times of sorrow, times of worry, times of renewal — all call for sharing food. That is one reason your Vermont Foodbank exists, to make sure we can all celebrate with and comfort each other.

Comfort food is more than just a way to fill your stomach. Birthday cake is more than just dessert. A Thanksgiving turkey is more than just a roasted bird. While not everyone recognizes or celebrates Thanksgiving, food traditions exist in all cultures, everywhere on earth. Asking “What’s your favorite food?” is universal.

Food is unique. Essential to life and yet our bodies have evolved to experience it in such nuanced ways. Our first meal is often our first human connection — being nurtured and fed by someone who cares for us. Our noses, eyes, and mouths give us millions of subtle and not-so-subtle signals about what we’re eating.

Tastes differ across place, culture, and personal preference. Here at the Vermont Foodbank, we celebrate those differences and honor each individual’s needs and desires. We invite you to celebrate with us. Enjoy your food, and the experience around it. With your continuing support, everyone in Vermont will do the same.

Thank you!

John Sayles
CEO
Helping each other fill the table, this holiday season and all year

Michael’s wages don’t cover living costs right now, so he got in touch with the Foodbank. Now Michael has help purchasing groceries and is sharing his story to spread hope to the community.

“I love watching old movies, helping other people (within my capacity), and telling my story, so hopefully people will realize there is always, always hope!” says Michael.

Michael works as a cashier at a pharmacy in southern Vermont and recently applied for 3SquaresVT with assistance from the Vermont Foodbank, provided with your support. 3SquaresVT (sometimes called SNAP or food stamps) is a program that supplies money to purchase groceries each month.

“I make $13 an hour. That’s $10 estimated hourly net,” explains Michael. With inflation at a 40-year high, and the cost of living outpacing worker wages, grocery costs have become unmanageable for many neighbors across Vermont. Michael says the 3SquaresVT benefits he now receives are equal to about 6 ¼ hours worked on the sales floor.

“It’s affected me greatly in many ways … I’m very grateful!” shares Michael, “And yes, the foods I purchase are very much me!”

This holiday season, Michael plans to celebrate with a festive meal and his 10 ½-year-old black cat, Kathy-Ellen, “who brings me nothing but good luck.”

“I have enjoyed working to the last minute and then go home to watch movies such as It’s A Wonderful Life and the claymation cartoons of Rankin/Bass and Charles Schultz, while having a scaled-down holiday dinner of the traditional turkey,” says Michael.

It takes all of us — the Foodbank, the state and federal government, and community members like you and Michael — supporting one another as we can, to make sure everyone in Vermont has nourishing food this holiday season and every day of the year.

Michael describes the assistance he received from the Foodbank as “amazing” and encourages neighbors to apply for 3SquaresVT. “Do it!!” he says, “You have nothing to lose … tax dollars pay for this … there are people out there fighting and sacrificing (sometimes with their lives) for your rights! For happiness, peace, etc. Food goes hand in hand with this!”

If you are interested in sharing your story, please visit vtfoodbank.org/share-your-story. To learn more about 3SquaresVT, visit vtfoodbank.org/3svt.

*Photo substituted to protect privacy.
More Vermont apples to more Vermont neighbors

In partnership with two Vermont orchards, and with support from you, local apple “seconds” are making their way to community members facing hunger — just in time for favorite autumn and holiday dishes.

“As a novice farmer, it’s hard to imagine someone that we would be more thrilled to be growing for and caring for than a food insecure population of our neighbors,” says Lauri, who founded Radicle Apple along with her husband Doug. Radicle Apple is a non-profit orchard in Saxtons River, and one of two Vermont orchards that the Foodbank is partnering with in a new effort called Every Vermont Apple.

This fall marks the second year of Every Vermont Apple, an initiative that you help support, focused on distributing more local fruit to neighbors experiencing hunger while supporting local agriculture. The Foodbank purchases apple “seconds” from Radicle Apple and Scott Farm Orchards, located in Dummerston, at a lower cost than first-quality fruit, which allows the Foodbank to source more apples from Vermont farms than would otherwise be financially possible.

These apple “seconds” may be slightly imperfect but are high-quality, ecologically grown fruit and include heirloom varieties carefully cultivated by the farms’ orchardists Erin (Scott Farm), and Zeke and Ali (Radicle Apple).

“Just the thought that those apples, that are 98% perfect … but just because of that 2% they can’t make it to the shelf of the food co-op … therefore they’re going to be discarded
and just pressed into juice, sometimes is a little bit heartbreaking,” explains Simon, the manager at Scott Farm. “I’m like, this is a totally decent apple.”

Simon pauses and laughs, “My kids complain because that’s all I bring home, seconds.”

This year, close to 15,000 pounds of these perfect and almost perfect apples will be distributed at local food shelves in the Brattleboro area and through Vermont Foodbank events and programs, just in time for holiday meals and celebrations.

For Lauri and Doug’s family, apple crisp with hard sauce is a staple of the festive season — a dessert they learned was a Thanksgiving favorite of both their grandmothers. “So, we have this beautiful dish,” shares Lauri, “That has become a symbol of our unknown traditions that come together and get passed on.”

Simon, who grew up in Brittany, France, likes to make tarte aux pommes (an apple tart) for the holidays. “Very simple slices of apple, making a little sugar egg mixture as a filling, but just an open tart with a really nice crust. Simple, but put a lot of apples in there … And with the right varieties, with some really good heirloom varieties … those make it just incredible.”

During the first two years of the Every Vermont Apple program, you have helped support neighbors facing hunger, Vermont farms, and the local economy with the purchase and distribution of about 43,000 pounds of local apple “seconds.”

This effort is a true collaboration, with the orchards adjusting business operations for the needs and the mission of the Foodbank. During a year when groceries are more expensive than ever, it’s especially meaningful to be able to provide fresh-picked Vermont apples to families and neighbors experiencing hunger in our communities.

“We always try to pick and pack the apples quickly enough that the patrons of the Foodbank will be able to share our experience of having really fresh fruit right off the tree. These apples are truly so much better than a typical supermarket apple that sits in a refrigerator for two months and travels 1,000 miles to get to them,” says Doug.

“It’s a feel-good program … I really like it and I wish we could do much more of it. I wish … I think with all the apples that Vermont orchards have, we could feed all Vermonters,” adds Simon. “It feels good, it’s great.”
While getting food out into our Vermont communities is a core function of your Foodbank, we know that addressing the root causes of hunger is key to solving the issue. A place to see this work in action is in the kitchens at Capstone Community Action in Barre, and Feeding Chittenden in Burlington, where the Community Kitchen Academy (CKA) program has been training cooks since 2009.

Over 430 students have graduated from the academy, with 88% obtaining employment after graduation. They leave with more than job skills; throughout their training, students prepare meals that are distributed to neighbors experiencing hunger in the community. More than 785,000 meal servings have been distributed since the program began, and thanks to you, CKA will continue to feed communities and prepare students for fulfilling careers.

Here’s what a few recent grads have to say about the program, and their favorite recipes for you to try this holiday season.

**Roxanne**
69 years old
Williamstown

“It makes me happy [to cook for the community] because I've been in the circumstances where I've had to be on the receiving end. So doing this, and learning about all the different vegetables and things, I feel like I’m giving back to the community and learning at the same time.”

**Roxanne’s recipe:**
Green Bean Casserole
Matty
33 years old
North Hyde Park

“I love [CKA], absolutely love it. I started here like five weeks ago, six weeks ago. I struggle with addiction pretty seriously ... my life’s been pretty sporadic and crazy, but in the last six weeks I’ve done nothing but be here, and I’m composed, on point ... I’m really doing it right now, [Chef] Joey is an amazing person.”

Matty’s recipe:
Peanut Butter Fudge

Phill
37 years old
Barre

“Being in this kitchen, making these meals now, really hits home because I was on the other side of that receiving end, and I just feel really good being a part of that, knowing that there are other people like me who can’t afford the food at that time in their life, and it really makes a huge difference, you know. It takes a lot of stress off you when you know you can at least eat that day.”

Phill’s recipe: Pasta Fasul

Get the recipes at vtfoodbank.org/ckarecipes.
A Holiday Feast for us all

Give the perfect gift

Instead of presents, consider making a donation in honor of a friend, family member, or colleague. For every $35 you donate, we’ll send you a blank, special edition holiday card you can mail to someone special this holiday season.

This year’s card art, titled “February Gardener,” was donated by Vermont artist Loré Pemberton.

All proceeds from this holiday card benefit the Vermont Foodbank and help provide food to friends and neighbors who are experiencing hunger.

Your Name: _____________________________________________________________
Address: _______________________________________________________________
City: ___________________________ State: __________ Zip: ________________
Phone Number: (______)________________ E-mail: _________________________
Amount Enclosed $____________ Please enclose a minimum gift of $35 per card
Charge my (check one): ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ AMEX ☐ Discover
Card Number:____________________ Expiration Date:_____ CVV Code:_____
Signature: ____________________________

Order online at vtfoodbank.org/holidaycards or mail this completed form to:
Vermont Foodbank, Attn: Holiday Card, 33 Parker Road, Barre, VT 05641

PLEASE NOTE: To ensure that your holiday gift card arrives to you before December 25th, please mail your form to us by December 9th.

Thank you for giving the gift of meals to Vermont neighbors this holiday season.